

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

1-8-09

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Spiegel Office Building

Other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

Street & number 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street not for publication

City or town Chicago vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

State Illinois code IL county Cook code 031

Zip code 60603

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.

( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wendell L. Ishpo  
Signature of certifying official

Jan. 8, 2009  
Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government



Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Office Building

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Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade Sub: Office Building

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Moderne  

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Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: concrete

Roof: Flat roof, tar

Walls: brick, concrete

Other: steel frame windows, glass block

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Industry

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Period of Significance 1936-1958  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Significant Dates 1936, 1941-42  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Batley & Kipp, A. Epstein & Sons  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Allen Johnson, Director and Emily Ramsey, Associate

organization MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC date July 21, 2008

street & number 53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 1357 telephone (312) 786-1700

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60603

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Dubin Residential

street & number 4252 N. Cicero Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60641

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**Architectural Description**

The Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street is located approximately six miles south of Chicago's commercial center in the original east tract of the Central Manufacturing District, one of the first planned industrial developments in the United States. The property sits just west of the intersection of South Morgan Street on the north side of West 35<sup>th</sup> Street and fronts that street 325 feet. The building, a six-story flat-roofed industrial structure of brick and concrete set on a raised concrete foundation, was built using flat-slab construction methods. The primary façade along West 35<sup>th</sup> Street is 15 bays long and features continuous dark red brick spandrels in running bond that project slightly from the wall plane. Recessed brick piers separate banks of large multi-light steel windows set on continuous concrete sills. Two prominent corner stair towers, located on the southeast and southwest corners of the building, serve as the dominant architectural elements on the 35<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. The towers feature repeating vertical bands of glass block that rise from the middle of the raised first floor to the top of the sixth floor and are separated by projecting square brick columns that begin at the concrete base of the building and terminate with squared concrete capitals. The towers are topped with simple concrete copings. The primary entrances to the building are located on the south sides of these stair towers. Each entry consists of two single doorways flanking a central window of glass blocks. "Spiegel, Inc." is formed into the concrete lintels above the entryway. The vertical emphasis of these corner towers balances the strong horizontality of the main façade.

On the east elevation, flush concrete columns separate the wall into five evenly-spaced bays. Red brick spandrels and concrete lintels frame groups of multi-light steel windows on each floor. The north elevation, which faces a service alley, is similarly configured with 16 bays. Common brick replaces the red face brick used on the south and east elevations. The top two floors of the building are set back slightly along the north elevation, and a metal fire escape rises in the center of the wall. The west elevation originally shared a wall with a four-story brick warehouse—built by Spiegel in 1911—at the corner of West 35<sup>th</sup> Street and South Aberdeen Avenue. When that warehouse was demolished in the 1990s, the west elevation of the Spiegel Office Building was rebuilt with red brick and original window openings at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floor level were covered over. Concrete stringcourses now mark the floors on the windowless wall. The west side of the southwest corner stair tower, which was originally obscured by the adjacent warehouse building, was rebuilt to mimic the southeast tower. Just north of the southwest stair tower is a steel frame entryway, with double steel and glass doors topped by large transoms. A loading dock occupies the north end of the west elevation.



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Typical of flat slab construction, the interiors are open spaces supported by flared concrete columns. Dropped ceilings have been installed on several floors, partially obscuring the flared capitals. Photographs dating from the 1950s and 1960s show the floors of the building utilized as open clerical offices, with rows of desks spanning the unobstructed space between the concrete columns [Figure 12]. Original plans for the 1941-42 addition by A. Epstein and interviews with former employees of Spiegel confirm that the interior spaces were designed as open offices with no permanent partitions.

### Integrity

The Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street retains a high degree of integrity and continues to convey its character as a well-designed example of an Art-Moderne style flat slab construction industrial building and as one of the few remaining structures built by Spiegel, Inc. in the original east tract of the Central Manufacturing District. The exterior of the building, including the brick curtain walls with steel sash multi-light windows and the corner stair towers with glass block, remains largely as it was in 1942. A number of the original windows have been replaced—approximately 40% of the original multi-light steel frame windows remain on the south façade, and the east and north elevations retain approximately 60% of their original windows. The west elevation, which was originally a shared wall with the now-demolished 1911 Spiegel warehouse building, has been covered with a red brick veneer.

The structure remains in its original location. The 35<sup>th</sup> Street corridor between Morgan and Ashland still retains a number of buildings built or financed by the Central Manufacturing District. In addition to the 1907 and 1915 Spiegel warehouse buildings at 1061 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, the following buildings remain: the John Mangus & Company Warehouse (1911) at 1051-1059 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street; the Central Manufacturing District Bank and Club House (1912) just west of Aberdeen; the Alfred Pick Building (1911), located between South Racine Avenue and the Chicago River at 1200 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street; the Boiler Compound Factory (c. 1910) at 1029 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, directly opposite the Spiegel Office Building; the Acme Printing Company Building (c.1920) at 1130 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Schulze & Burch Biscuit Company Plant (1939). Of these, only the Schulze & Burch Plant shares the same modern design as the Spiegel Office Building. The one-story plant, designed by an engineering firm called The Engineering Systems, Inc. and completed in 1940, features blond brick walls, glass block windows, and rounded corners. The remaining extant Central Manufacturing District buildings along West 35<sup>th</sup> Street are all traditional early 20<sup>th</sup>-century industrial designs, with red brick exteriors and simplified classical detailing.

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**Statement of Significance**

**Summary Statement**

The Spiegel Office Building is located at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. The building, a six-story Art Moderne-style industrial structure of reinforced concrete and brick, is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with Spiegel, Inc., a nationally-known mail order house that was founded in Chicago by German immigrant Joseph Spiegel in 1865, and for its distinction as one of a small group of industrial structures that comprised the original east tract of the Central Manufacturing District, one of the first planned industrial developments in the United States. The building is also locally significant under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of an Art Moderne-style industrial loft building utilizing flat slab construction methods. Although designed specifically for use as offices to support Spiegel's mail order activities, the building exemplifies the advantages of loft construction, which provided universal spaces that could be configured to accommodate a variety of uses.

The building was constructed in two phases, with the initial two-story structure designed by the engineering firm of Battey & Kipp, and the subsequent four-story addition completed by A. Epstein & Sons. Paul L. Battey and Alfred Kipp designed power plants, railroad facilities, and industrial structures throughout the Mid-west during the 1920s and 1930s. Abraham Epstein, a Russian immigrant who received his degree in engineering from the University of Illinois in 1911, served as consulting architect for the Union Stockyards and the Central Manufacturing District in Chicago from 1921 until his death in 1958. The firm, which became A. Epstein & Sons in 1946, is today one of the largest engineering and architecture firms in the world.

The construction of the building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street was a direct response to the tremendous growth of Spiegel, Inc., a mail order business that was originally established in 1906 as an offshoot of the Spiegel Home Furnishing Company. The company built its first office building and warehouse on 35<sup>th</sup> Street in the newly established Central Manufacturing District in 1907, constructed a second warehouse building in 1911, and acquired several other buildings along 35<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate its expanding operations. The Art Moderne building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street was the last building completed for Spiegel in the district, and was constructed specifically to consolidate the company's scattered offices into one building. The building's modern design contrasted sharply with more traditional industrial structures that Spiegel had previously constructed in the District, and corresponded to a dramatic shift in the company's overall marketing strategy. Today, the building is one of only three remaining structures in the Central Manufacturing District that were commissioned and built by Spiegel. The other extant buildings, two

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warehouse structure constructed in 1907 and 1915 as rear additions to the company's original office building on the south side of 35<sup>th</sup> Street, are purely utilitarian structures and feature none of the prominence or design aesthetic of the building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street. The building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street survives as a tangible reminder of the Chicago operations of one of the most innovative and successful mail order businesses of the twentieth century.

**Early History of the Spiegel Company**

The Spiegel Office Building is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with Spiegel, Incorporated, one of the largest and most successful mail order companies in the country. The company was founded in 1865 by Joseph Spiegel, the son of a German rabbi who immigrated with his family to the United States in 1848. Spiegel fought for the Union during the Civil War and spent the last few months of the war in a Confederate prison camp in Texas. Upon his release in 1865, Spiegel moved to Chicago to join his brother-in-law, Henry Liebenstein, in the wholesale furniture business. With Liebenstein's help, Joseph Spiegel opened a small furniture store, J. Spiegel and Company, on Wabash Avenue. By 1870, Spiegel had married Henry's niece, Mathilde Liebenstein, and had settled into a comfortable home at 833 Prairie Avenue. Although Spiegel lost his fledgling business in the Chicago Fire in 1871, he rebuilt quickly on Wabash Avenue with the financial assistance of a new partner, Jacob Cahn, and was able to profit from the disaster, as thousands of homeowners rebuilt and re-furnished homes. Cahn retired in 1879 and Spiegel continued to manage the business successfully on his own. In 1885, he began running advertisements in the Chicago newspapers and in 1886 moved the company to a larger building on State Street. By the early 1890s, however, the company began to founder in the wake of competition from discount furniture stores selling inexpensive goods on credit. Spiegel & Company went bankrupt in 1892, but Joseph's sons, Modie and Sidney, urged their father to try again. In January of 1893, Joseph and Modie filed a corporate charter for Spiegel House Furnishings Company of Chicago. In a reluctant concession to the times, Joseph agreed that the new company would sell only low- and moderately-priced home furnishings, and that every item would be available for purchase on an installment plan.

The decision to offer financing proved to be a sound one. The business was a success, and the first Spiegel branch store opened at 48<sup>th</sup> Street and Ashland Avenue in 1898. The company also unveiled a new advertising slogan—"We Trust the People!"—that openly celebrated credit merchandising. By the early 1900s, the company's extensive newspaper advertising was drawing interest from outside Chicago, and many people wrote in to request instructions for ordering Spiegel merchandise through the mail. Joseph and Modie Spiegel did not at first think it worth the effort and cost to operate a mail order house, especially given the fact that the two largest and most successful mail order giants in the country—Sears,

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Roebuck & Company and Montgomery Ward—were already operating within the city. However, Joseph's third son, Arthur, was convinced that Spiegel's liberal credit policies could give the company an edge in the mail order market. As James Cornell Jr. observed in *The People Get the Credit: The First One Hundred Years of the Spiegel Story*, many of the letters that the company received "were not particularly ecstatic about Spiegel merchandise. It was credit that these homeowners wanted."<sup>1</sup>

In an effort to respond to customer demand, in 1905 Spiegel Home Furnishing established a mail order division to serve an area within a 100-mile radius of Chicago and became the first retail establishment to offer installment credit for mail order items [Figure 3]. Arthur Spiegel, who spearheaded the new endeavor, cleverly adapted the company's motto to read "We Trust the People—Everywhere!"<sup>2</sup> The policy was wildly successful, but the family-owned company, overwhelmed by the response, was threatened with the prospect of falling victim to its own success. Rather than sell company stock to finance an expansion of their mail order business and risk losing control of the company, the Spiegel family allied with May, Stern and Company, which operated a nationwide chain of furniture stores. In 1906, the mail order operation of Spiegel, May, Stern and Company, was incorporated and Arthur Spiegel was named president of the new company [Figure 4]. In its first year of business, Spiegel, May, Stern and Company generated mail order sales totally nearly \$1 million.

Flush with this early success and optimistic about the new company's prospects, management decided that constructing a separate facility would allow Spiegel, May, Stern to create an efficient mail order system and establish its own physical identity. After careful consideration, the company purchased land on 35<sup>th</sup> Street just west of Morgan Street, in the newly formed Central Manufacturing District.

### **The Central Manufacturing District**

The Central Manufacturing District had begun as an outgrowth of the Chicago Union Stockyards. The Chicago Junction Railway and Union Stockyards Company had purchased the stockyards in 1890 and added new freight yards, a Union Freight Station, and modern locomotives. These improvements resulted in an excess of capacity that the stockyards alone could not satisfy, and the Chicago Junction Railway began to look for ways to increase tonnage along its lines. After determining that the area around 35<sup>th</sup> Street and the South Branch of the Chicago River, home to a declining lumber trade, was geographically well suited to their needs, the Railway acquired the small lumbering spurs that existed there and began

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<sup>1</sup> James Cornell, Jr. *The People Get the Credit: The First One Hundred Years of the Spiegel Story* (Spiegel: 1964), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

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buying parcels of land around their new lines. By 1908, the Chicago Junction Railway had acquired all of the land between 35<sup>th</sup> Street and 39<sup>th</sup> Street, from Morgan Street west to Ashland Avenue, approximately 400 acres total, which was christened the Central Manufacturing District of Chicago. J. A. Spoor (Chairman of the Chicago Junction Railway Board of Directors) and Arthur G. Leonard were named Trustees of the District; H. E. Poronto, the company's Vice President and Secretary, became the District's Industrial Agent [Figure 1 & 2].

The Central Manufacturing District was unlike any other industrial development operating at that time in the country. The property of the District was held by the trustees and covered by a bond issue. Proceeds from the sale of bonds were used to finance permanent improvements. The District trustees developed an attractive system of tenant services and introduced a comprehensive building program headed by a full-time staff of architects and engineers. It was this highly-developed system of construction and tightly controlled and regulated land use that distinguished the Central Manufacturing District as a planned industrial park and not simply a real estate operation. As Frances Porter Alexander noted in his study of the Central Manufacturing District:

The process of building the C.M.D. epitomized the concentrated managerial control which the trustees exerted over all other facets of the district's program. Site preparation, traffic planning, design and construction, and financial services all emanated from a central architectural and engineering department or, in the case of contractual arrangements, from the trustees. The system of construction services developed by the C.M.D. became a distinguishing feature of the modern industrial park of the post World War II era...From its earliest period of development, the C.M.D. employed architects and engineers to oversee all phases of site preparation and building construction. Although some manufacturers contracted the design of their plants to outside architects or engineers, all construction was required to conform to Central Manufacturing District standards.<sup>3</sup>

Like the Union Stockyards, the District had its own bank and maintained a private club for business executives of the district, both housed in a classical building constructed in 1912 on West 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Every detail, down to the design of lamp posts and the landscaping of parkways and common areas, was carefully considered.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frances Porter Alexander, "The Making of the Modern Industrial Park: A History of the Central Manufacturing District of Chicago, Illinois." Thesis, George Washington University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 1991, p.105

<sup>4</sup> Chicago Junction Railway Service. The Central Manufacturing District: A book of descriptive text, photographs & testimonial letters about Chicago Junction Railway Service and the Central Manufacturing District—the center of Chicago

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Aesthetic considerations aside, the primary advantages of the Central Manufacturing District were its location in the geographical center of Chicago, its accessibility by various means of transport, and its proximity to large pools of skilled and unskilled labor. Every building in the district had its own switch track connecting to the Chicago Junction Railway, which in turn connected directly to every trunk line railroad that entered Chicago. Forty-eight percent of Chicago's population lived within a four mile radius of the District, making it a "mecca for the unemployed."<sup>5</sup> The District was a tremendous success from its inception, attracting firms from other parts of the city and new businesses in the Chicago market. The variety of businesses in the District was impressive and included producers of cooper's stock, iron, steel and metal products, coal, glass, chemicals, cotton oil, wool, paper, pianos, furniture, medicine, automobiles, nails, tiles, biscuits, beer, sausage casings, and chewing gum. By 1915, tenants in the District included many well known companies, such as the William Wrigley, Jr. Company, the Ford Motor Company, United (Rexall) Drug Company, the Pullman Couch Company, Pacific Lumber Company, Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, and Spiegel, May, Stern and Company.

Spiegel was one of the first companies to move its operations into the District's original east tract, and would eventually become the largest single tenant in the District [Figure 10]. In 1907, the Spiegel, May, Stern and Company entered into a financing agreement with the trustees of the Central Manufacturing District to construct a two-story brick office building with warehouses in the rear at 1061-1100 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street [Figure 5]. The building was designed by architect Alfred S. Alschuler, a Chicago native who graduated from the Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of Technology) in 1899 and began his professional practice with Dankmar Adler in 1899. Alschuler practiced with Samuel Treat under the name Treat and Alschuler from 1903 until 1907, when he established his own industrial and commercial design practice. Although he was never listed formally as the architect for the Central Manufacturing District, a 1910 article on utilitarian architecture in Chicago published in *Architectural Record* listed Alschuler as the "regularly employed architect for the Central Manufacturing District."<sup>6</sup>

### **Spiegel, May, Stern and Company and the Mail Order Business**

Once the company was settled in the Central Manufacturing District, Arthur Spiegel turned to the immediate task of finding capable men with experience in mail order to join the firm. He succeeded in

<sup>4</sup> "The Great Central Market", November 1915.. p.14.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Peter B. Wight, "Utilitarian Architecture at Chicago," *Architectural Record*, Feb. 1910, p.197.

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luring accountant Houston Landis and junior executive Frederick Innes from Sears, Roebuck & Company. Landis became Spiegel, May, Stern's office manager. Innes was brought in to develop workflow procedures, paper-handling systems, and internal-control bookkeeping. Modie Spiegel continued to act as the company treasurer, and Sidney Spiegel served as merchandise manager. The final addition to the company's management group was Edward L. Swikard, who was brought on as Spiegel's mail order advertiser. By 1910, the company had begun to diversify its product lines, branching into inexpensive, factory-manufactured clothing. To accommodate these new products, Spiegel, May, Stern again brought in Alfred Alschuler, who designed a four-story brick warehouse that was constructed on the northeast corner of Mosprat (now Aberdeen Avenue) and West 35<sup>th</sup> Street and completed in 1911 [Figure 6]. The following year, Spiegel offered apparel for the first time through its catalogs. The company then launched its own line of ladies' fashions styled by a charismatic fictional designer, Martha Lane Adams. The line was so successful that by 1916 Martha had earned her own catalog, and Spiegel, May, Stern had constructed a large rear addition to its modest two-story office building to make room for the inventory.<sup>7</sup> That same year, Arthur Spiegel died of pneumonia at the young age of 32.

Despite the loss of its dynamic founder, the Spiegel, May, Stern mail order company continued to grow by appealing primarily to residents of small towns who wanted or needed to buy goods on credit. After World War I, Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward adopted similar installment credit plans and Spiegel found itself in more direct competition with the mail order giants. However, Spiegel's more liberal credit terms—no money down for preferred customers, very small down payments for new customers, and no carrying charges—helped to distinguish the company from its competitors. Ed Swikard's innovative promotional plans also helped set the company apart during the 1920s. In 1923, Swikard developed a flyer for promotion of four products—an aluminum kitchenware set, a four-piece living room furniture set, a sampling of fiber rugs, and a Congoleum art rug—all at very low cost, and all available for one dollar down and a 30-day free trial. The response to these promotions, and to the Congoleum offer in particular, doubled Spiegel's monthly sales and stimulated a total sales increase of \$3.9 million for the year. A second Congoleum rug promotion in 1926, sent to nine million households, produced a rise of \$4.7 million in mail order sales. Although Spiegel's total volume of sales could never approach that of Sears, Roebuck or Montgomery Ward, the company was doing well and was quickly increasing its presence in the mail order market. A study of mail order sales between 1919 and 1929 showed that, although sales in general declined by \$89 million, Spiegel, May, Stern's mail order sales increased by 204

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<sup>7</sup> Smalley, Orange A. and Frederick D. Sturdivant. *The Credit Merchants: A History of Spiegel, Inc.* (Carbondale, 1973), p.111. *Central Manufacturing District*, p. 90-91. Company letterhead dating from 1915 shows a drawing of the warehouse addition under construction.

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percent. In 1928, the company went public, and in 1929 the Spiegel family began liquidating its retail furniture business. By 1932, the last Spiegel furniture store had closed its doors.

Although the early years of the Great Depression saw Spiegel, May, Stern and Company scrambling to recover from losses associated with the general economic turndown and from the liquidation of its retail operations, Spiegel entered a period of unprecedented growth between 1933 and 1937. The company's turn around was primarily the accomplishment of M. J. Spiegel, Modie Spiegel's oldest son, who took over leadership of Spiegel, May, Stern in 1933. M. J., who was only thirty-two when he became president of the company, was driven, energetic, and willing to work hard. As Spiegel historians Orange A. Smalley and Frederick D. Sturdivant observed, "when Montgomery Ward was in deep trouble and needed 'brains' it acquired them in Sewell L. Avery for \$100,000 a year....Spiegel had neither this kind of money nor the reputation needed to attract such talent. Instead the company found it in the Spiegel family."<sup>8</sup>

Under M. J.'s leadership, the company achieved an astounding sales increase of 790 percent over the five year period beginning in 1932 and ending in 1937. This figure is even more impressive when compared to the relative increases in sales at Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. In 1932, Spiegel sales amounted to just 6.1 percent of those of Sears; by 1937, the amount had soared to 27.7 percent. Spiegel's success was based on targeted outreach designed to draw new customers into the Spiegel credit system by offering a limited number of standard household items at cut rate prices on a restricted installment payment plan that would prove their credit worthiness. Once these new customers had successfully proven their willingness and ability to pay their accounts, the company would send a complete sales catalog with an invitation to apply for a standard credit account. These campaigns not only substantially increased Spiegel's total number of individual mail order customers (from 360,000 in 1932 to 1.2 million in 1936), it also increased the average dollar amount of those customers' orders, from \$13.28 in 1932 to \$15.12 in 1935. In 1934, the average Montgomery Ward sale was one-third that of the average Spiegel sale. A series of successful "add-on" promotional campaigns helped the company to gain over 250,000 new customers and increase sales by over \$10.4 million in 1936, making it the most prosperous year yet for Spiegel, May, Stern.

### **The Spiegel Office Building**

Each building that Spiegel built along 35<sup>th</sup> Street in the Central Manufacturing District represented a

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<sup>8</sup> Smalley and Sturdivant, p. 194.



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milestone in the company's business operations. The 1907 office and warehouse at 1061-1100 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street marked the beginning of the newly formed Spiegel, May, Stern and Company mail order enterprise. The 1911 warehouse at 1040 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street represented the company's expansion into clothing and other new products, and the expansion of the 1907 warehouse in 1915 and 1916 reflected the success of the Martha Lane Adams fashion line. The company continued to expand its physical presence in the Central Manufacturing District during the 1920s and early 1930s by taking over existing buildings along 35<sup>th</sup> Street, including the John Magnus & Company Buildings at 1041 to 1059 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street and the Alfred Pick & Company Building at 1200 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street. The successes of the mid-1930s gave Spiegel ample funding for a new building campaign, and the rate at which the company was leasing additional warehouse space suggests that the need for expansion was considerable. However, the company resisted constructing any new buildings in its Central Manufacturing District complex until 1936. That year, the company officially changed its name to Spiegel, Inc. and M. J. Spiegel began work on an ambitious new marketing plan that would completely change the firm's direction, from a discount mail order concern to a high-end catalog company that provided high quality goods and exceptional customer service.

The company's plan for a new two-story modern office building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street was a physical representation of the new Spiegel [Figure 7]. M.J.'s goal for the business was to attain a reputation for higher quality, and would involve abandoning the sole promotion of credit at the expense of quality. The more affluent customers that Spiegel wanted to appeal to "tended to be more selective about what they bought and where they bought it, tended to be better informed about customer goods, and tended to demand better quality for both merchandise and service."<sup>9</sup> Functionally, the sleek new office building, designed by the engineering firm of Battey & Kipp, Inc. and completed in January of 1937, was designed to allow for increased efficiency by consolidating Spiegel's clerical departments into one building, thus ensuring that orders from the company's demanding new clients would be filled and delivered promptly. From a design perspective, the building illustrated that Spiegel was a modern company with a modern aesthetic. The two-story, Art Moderne-style structure utilized standard loft construction with reinforced concrete flat slabs supported by concrete pillars. The exterior of the building featured curtain walls with bands of large multi-light steel windows separated by continuous brick spandrels along the south (front), north (rear), and east elevations. Distinctive projecting stair towers with vertical glass block windows on the southwest and southeast corners serve as the primary entrances to the building. Anticipating that the need for additional space might soon arise, the building was designed to permit the future addition of four additional floors.

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<sup>9</sup> Smalley and Sturdivant, p. 224.

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The architecture of Spiegel's new building was especially noticeable in the original east tract of the Central Manufacturing District, where almost all of the buildings were constructed prior to 1920 and featured traditional brick veneers and terra cotta or stone detailing that distracted from the modern methods used in their construction. M. J. Spiegel's attempts to portray Spiegel, Inc. as a modern company was not limited to architecture—in the late 1930s, he hired Maholy-Nagy, an artist and member of the influential Bauhaus School, as a consultant on design and styling for the company's catalogs. Although Maholy-Nagy's recommendations, which included pop-up pictures for the furniture section, were never implemented, the experiment did prove M. J.'s desire to update and refine Spiegel's corporate image.

The years between 1938 and 1943 saw the implementation of M.J. Spiegel's new vision for the company. Following a complete reorganization of the company's executives, Spiegel rolled out an ambitious five year plan in January of 1939 that sought to emphasize "quality merchandise for quality customers." The plan was based on what was labeled the "Complete Store" concept—the development of an expanded and improved catalog that would offer the highest quality merchandise for any given price, would always have the latest modern merchandise, and would carry merchandise under a brand name.<sup>10</sup> Although no all elements of the plan were in place at the end of 1942, there was no question that Spiegel had made significant strides in improving merchandise quality, the appearance of the catalogs, and organization of the company as a whole between 1937 and 1942.

In an effort to further improve company organization and streamline office procedures, Spiegel hired engineer Abraham Epstein to complete the four-story addition to the 1936 office building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street [Figures 8 & 9]. Epstein, who had succeeded S. Scott Joy in 1921 as the Central Manufacturing District's preferred architect, adhered closely to the original design by Battey & Kipp, extending the corner towers and maintaining the scale, massing, and materials of the existing structure. The newly expanded building allowed Spiegel to consolidate all of its offices, which had previously been scattered among numerous warehouses, into a single building. The first and third floors were reserved for human resources and other general company clerical services. The second floor originally held a cafeteria and personnel offices. The fourth floor was devoted to mail opening, and the fifth and sixth floors were dedicated to credit processing. The building served as a clearinghouse for the enormous volumes of mail that the company received every day. By the 1960s, employees working in the building were processing over a ton of letters and order requests every day.

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<sup>10</sup> Smalley and Sturdivant, p. 226-230.

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The onset of World War II created product and labor shortages for Spiegel, and in 1942, after the U. S. government officially discouraged Americans from buying on credit, Spiegel discontinued its popular “no charge for credit” policy. By the end of 1943, the move had cost the company \$3.8 million.<sup>11</sup> In an effort to curtail the decline in sales, Spiegel again entered the retail market, hoping to mimic the recent successes at Sears and Montgomery Ward. By 1950, Spiegel was operating over 160 retail stores that specialized in a wide range of products, including clothing, furniture, auto supplies, sporting goods, and appliances.<sup>12</sup> Although the retail venture was initially modestly successful, the operation and maintenance costs soon began to weigh heavily on the company, and by 1954 Spiegel had sold off most of its retail stores and turned its primary focus again to mail order. The company returned to its roots by unveiling a new liberal credit plan. Called the Budget Power Plan, it offered customers lines of credit as high as \$1000 with very low monthly payments. By 1965, when the Spiegel family sold the business to the Beneficial Finance Company, Spiegel, Inc. had reached more than \$300 million in annual sales and nearly two million people had Spiegel credit accounts. Spiegel continued to use the buildings along West 35<sup>th</sup> Street in the Central Manufacturing District, including the Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, as a distribution facility until 1993, when the company moved its headquarters to Ohio. It is estimated that the 1907 office and warehouse building and the 1911 warehouse constructed by Spiegel were demolished sometime after 1993. The only buildings constructed by Spiegel that remain from the original complex are the warehouse buildings at 1061 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, which were constructed in 1907 and c. 1915 and originally stood behind the now-demolished 1907 office building, and the Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### **Architectural Significance of the Spiegel Office Building**

The Spiegel Office Building is also locally significant under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of an Art Moderne-style industrial loft building utilizing flat slab construction methods, and is one of the only examples of streamlined modern industrial building in the original east tract of the Central Manufacturing District. Although designed specifically for use as offices to support Spiegel’s mail order activities, the building exemplifies the unique advantages inherent in reinforced concrete loft construction, which provided for well ventilated, well-lighted interior spaces that could be configured to accommodate a variety of uses. The building’s smooth, unadorned exterior, horizontal bands of windows and distinctive corner stair towers are cost-effective industrial interpretations of the streamlined Art Deco and Art Moderne aesthetic popular during the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>11</sup> “Spiegel, Inc.” p. 3, [www.answers.com/topics/spiegel-inc](http://www.answers.com/topics/spiegel-inc)

<sup>12</sup> Bay, C. A. “Satisfaction Guaranteed”, *Central Manufacturing District Magazine*, March, 1950 p.10.

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Prior to 1900, manufacturing companies in Chicago relied on standard mill construction when building factories and industrial buildings. Characterized by a framework of heavy wood columns and beams that shares the structural load with exterior masonry walls, standard mill construction was capable of carrying heavy loads and, though not fireproof, was a slow-burning building type. However, these 19<sup>th</sup> century factories were plagued by problems of inadequate light and ventilation. The development of reinforced concrete in the late 1800s revolutionized factory design in Chicago and across the United States, and reinforced concrete became the primary material for multi-story factory construction after 1900. Buildings framed in reinforced concrete could accommodate more windows for maximum daylight than buildings made from wood or brick, were less costly, more fire-resistant and less susceptible to vibration from machinery. Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century concrete loft buildings typically featured a framework of concrete columns and beams that provided structural support for the entire building, an exterior curtain wall of brick or concrete with large expanses of multi-light steel sash windows, 12 to 14 foot ceilings and flat roofs. Reinforced concrete loft structures typically displayed a high degree of uniformity on both the exterior and the interior. They were rectangular in shape with an exposed concrete skeleton, minimal ornament, repeated interior bays and expansive window walls. By 1910, the development of flat slab construction had further improved upon the reinforced concrete framing system. Developed in 1905 by Minneapolis engineer, C. A. P. Turner, flat slab construction eliminated the girders and beams from concrete framing and allowed for walls that were made primarily of glass. This would become the preferred method for industrial building after 1920, because the extra headroom permitted easy installation of electrical wiring and ducts for central heating and air conditioning systems.

Because the Central Manufacturing District was developed during a time of tremendous advances in industrial construction, the buildings within the District, and those of the Spiegel complex in particular, reflected the evolution and standardization of factory design that occurred during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first warehouse buildings built by Spiegel, May, Stern and Company, completed in 1907 and 1911, were standard mill construction with heavy timber framing, structural masonry walls, and pared-down exterior detailing. However, the company's 1907 two-story office building was built using the new technology of reinforced concrete framing, which the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company labeled as "fireproof construction." The 1915 warehouse addition was the first structure built by Spiegel that utilized the new flat slab construction techniques, with concrete posts and floors supporting brick curtain walls. By the time the company began the first phase of its modern office building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, flat slab construction was the accepted means of construction for industrial buildings in the city. The flat slab method also allowed the company to install central air conditioning in the building when the four story addition was completed in 1941-42.

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With the increasing complexity of many manufacturing processes and the use of new structural materials, factory design had increasingly become the domain of engineers. Like many industrial buildings built during the first half of the 20th century, the Spiegel Office Building was designed by firms whose primary focus was engineering, not architecture. The building was constructed in two phases, with the initial two-story structure designed by the engineering firm of Battey & Kipp, Inc. and the subsequent four-story addition completed by A. Epstein & Sons. Paul Battey received his degree in engineering from the University of Kansas in 1899. Alfred R. Kipp, a native of Indiana, received his engineering degree from Purdue University in 1895. By the mid-1920s, the two men had formed a successful partnership as Battey & Kipp, Inc., specializing in the design of industrial buildings. Battey & Kipp designed power plants, railroad facilities, and industrial structures throughout the Mid-west during the 1920s and 1930s, including the Campbell Soup Company plant at 2550 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street (1927, addition in 1934), the Union Tank Car Company paint shop in Hammond, Indiana (1935), and the Union Station Company heating plant between Taylor Street and Roosevelt Road (1931). Abraham Epstein, a Russian immigrant who received his degree in engineering from the University of Illinois in 1911, served as consulting architect for the Union Stockyards and the Central Manufacturing District in Chicago from 1921 until his death in 1958. Epstein's designs for the Union Stockyard's International Amphitheater (1934) and the Casper Tin Plate Company's new plant in the Central Manufacturing District's Crawford tract (1937) exhibited his firm's ability to integrate streamlined design elements into industrial buildings. The firm, which became A. Epstein & Sons in 1946, is today one of the largest engineering and architecture firms in the world.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* announced the plans for the new Spiegel Office Building on August 15, 1936, noting that work would begin the following Monday on a \$250,000 reinforced concrete addition to the Spiegel complex that would "double the present office capacity of the company."<sup>13</sup> On September 11, 1936 the permit was issued for the building, with Battey & Kipp listed as the architect of record and Campbell, Lowrie, & Lautermilch as the general contractor. Construction progressed smoothly through the fall and the building was ready for occupancy by January of 1937. In its February 1937 issue, the *Central Manufacturing District Magazine* approvingly called the new office building a "handsome modern structure" that "forms a noteworthy addition to the District."<sup>14</sup>

In 1941, A. Epstein was brought on to complete the planned four-story addition to the building. R. Lautermilch again came on as general contractor for the project. Although the permit was filed on May

<sup>13</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 August 1936, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Central Manufacturing District Magazine*, February 1937, p. 55.

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23 of 1941, construction stalled with American entry into World War II, and the building was not completed until November of 1942, over a year and a half later. The *Central Manufacturing District Magazine* featured the newly completed building in its December 1942 issue, and called the newly completed building “a fine example of the modern trend in industrial office buildings.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Central Manufacturing District Magazine*, December 1942, p. 64.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street sits just west of the corner of West 35th Street and South Morgan Avenue, encompassing the entire parcel associated with the building, identified by the Cook County Assessor's Office as Property Index Number 17-32-225-041-0000.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land occupied by and associated with the Spiegel Office Building at 1038 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

UTM References

Zone 16

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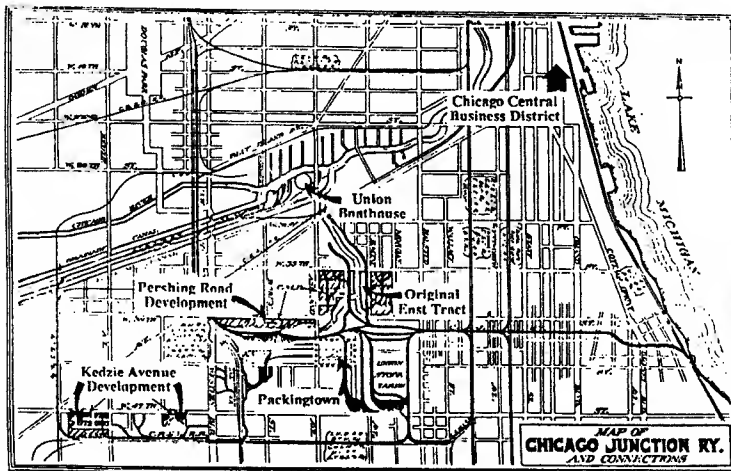


Figure 1: Map of the Central Manufacturing District's Developments, Including the Original East Tract (center of map)



Figure 2: Central Manufacturing District Logo, 1915

you.

If you have any questions or concerns in this regard please contact Alexis Abernathy, alexis\_abernathy@contractor.nps.gov, 202-354-2236.

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**WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 2/17/09 THROUGH 2/20/09**

**KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name**

**GEORGIA, HENRY COUNTY,  
Lawrenceville Street Historic District,  
Lawrenceville St. roughly between the Henry County Courthouse square and GA 20,  
McDonough, 09000054, LISTED, 2/20/09**

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Independence Park,  
3945 N. Springfield Ave.,  
Chicago, 09000023,  
LISTED, 2/18/09  
{Chicago Park District MPS}**

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Inland Steel Building,  
30 W. Monroe St.,  
Chicago, 09000024,  
LISTED, 2/18/09**

**ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Spiegel Office Building,  
1038 W. 35th St.,  
Chicago, 09000025,  
LISTED, 2/18/09**

**ILLINOIS, HAMILTON COUNTY,  
Cloud, Chalon Guard and Emma Blades, House, 300 S. Washington St., McLeansboro,  
09000026, LISTED, 2/18/09**

**ILLINOIS, KANE COUNTY,  
Wing Park Golf Course,  
1000 Wing St.,  
Elgin, 09000027,  
LISTED, 2/18/09**